Mr. Les Whitten 9/26/76

1401 16 St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20037

Dear Les,

Despite your recent silences I ~~wrote~~ write again in what I believe is your(pl) interest and to avoid even the appearance of not keeping my word.

As I told Mark Smolonsky when we spoke I had other relevant records and knowledge. I told him I planned my own usues but would inform him of what I have obtained and put together so he could do a better job on the column(s) based on the records about which he asked me at your suggestion.

I then had one use in mind, my books - one I've having to reprint and another I had to lay aside years ago and long to complete. Since then I have developed another possible use. I may know more in about a week.

I do not know how much space I'll have in the ~~reprint~~ reprint because of weight considerations. I mail most of the books I sell. I await the printer's dummy. I plan two separate but related additions if the weight limitations permit it. The first is completed. This morning I completed the draft of the second, which includes this material Mark discussed with me.

Would you regard it as credential when I tell you that although I have several FOIA requests that cover this material the CIA has not provided it yet and has not acknolwedged my reminders of several months ago? I obtained my copies not from the CIA but from another source. Copies plural, one set out of my possession, the minimum.

In getting about 4,000 words of this second part down on paper this morning I drew, of course, on many other records I have obtained over the years. It builds into what I believe is even more significant than I told Mark and wrote you. I believe it has developed into much more current and immediate political significance that I indicated. I am convinced it is but one of several stories I have that can influence the coming election.

My interest, as I believe you know, begins with making available to the people what the people need to know so society as we have it structured can function. Over the years this basic belief has required some sacrifices. As a practical matter I do not expect this to end. This may mean that I may decide to give away what others could and would sell. If I were satisfied that it would reach a ~~xl~~ larger audience in an honest representation I without doubt would.

Now I face other problems, not new to me. Essentially doing what I can to oppose the disinformation operators of both side. I've explained my views on the House committee to Mark, if not to you. And my apprehensions. Since then that opportunistic whore Mark Lane has done more ~~mischiff~~ mischief in an incompetent thievery thatm typically, he misdirected. With this he had much effect. Having nothing to do except promote himself and steal he has the time. He is also persuasive, as he is without scruple. I've been hoping he would sue me for saying such things in public. He is too smart for that. He'll intimidate people like Ben Bradlee, who actually confessed it to me in writing, but he'll not dare sue knowing that I have never said as much as I can prove. I'd ruin him in court.

So, trying to turn around the disinformation from those typified by Lane is also an immediate problem for me. With what I know of the Downing and Gonzalez record I do not regard this as an easy task. The one way in which I consider that possible is by reaching the House leadership and the other members of that committee. To be able to try to do this I have made some efforts. I have no idea of where they'll lead.

I have to be in Washington Thursday and Friday on two of my suits. Both court sessions are in the morning. On Friday I have a date for lunch with one to whom I've turned

for help. After that and before I return home I have a checkup on the thrombosis syndrome scheduled.

The third suit involves, I believe, a member of the new committee in a McCarthyite role, as it does Ford. If a decision on those records is not indicated in the near future, before the election, I'll probably give away what I have.

I consider that I have kept my word to Mark and to you. There has been more than enough time.

You would undoubtedly reach more people than I can, especially when I do not have the time or the means to go around with this. If I give my word on Friday I will have to keep it. I have until then to decide. Without meaningful assurances before then I'll have no real choice. If I expect none from you I do not want to leave any basis, no matter how frivolous, for anyone to accuse me of not keeping my word. You and the column have your problems and sense of importances, I have mine. I'm sorry they appear not to coincide.

Byzantine as this one frightening aspect is, it is but one aspect. What I regard as the danger to the country is real. There is another that within the knowledge my recent life has permitted of recent writing is a different Seven Days in May. This is why I asked Gary to put me in touch with your associate who wrote some number of Days of the Condor.

I tell you as a friend, not in recrimination, that of all the many disappointments of recent years the most painful is the fact that modern American journalism, except with such stuff as crooked tax collectors, does not stem from my high-school belief in Zenger and Paine or the college experiences that cost me my degree.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg